

Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund Annual Report 2024-2025

Prepared for AGMA Statutory Functions Committee

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About Forever Manchester

Forever Manchester is the only charity that raises money to fund and support community activity across Greater Manchester. We believe that connected communities make stronger, happier communities, so we love any activity that brings people together.

In every neighbourhood across Greater Manchester there are thousands of people involved in community activity. In fact, at any given time there are an unbelievable 20,000 local grassroots projects of varying sizes and interests taking place. These activities are the lifeblood of our neighbourhoods, they are happening right now on our doorsteps, and they are being run by people who give up their precious time to make our communities happier and safer places to be.

Forever Manchester cares about those people who care enough to act. We champion local people doing extraordinary things together. And when advice, encouragement and funding is needed, Forever Manchester is there to provide a hand up to support them.

Since Forever Manchester was established in 1989, we have delivered over £65 million into local communities. All the money raised for Forever Manchester is used to fund and support over 1,000 community projects each year. This means we will have supported community activity within one mile of your home or business if it's in Greater Manchester.

Forever Manchester is a charity for people round 'ere, supporting community activity year in and year out. But to do all this great stuff we need to raise money. So, whether you are a company or individual, your generosity can create something special right across Greater Manchester, keeping it great.

Join the movement.

Get involved.

ForeverManchester.com

The Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund

The Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund (GMDRF), formerly known as the Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Trust, was transferred in its entirety for management and delivery to Forever Manchester in April 2009. The total amount transferred was £475,646.38.

As part of an Endowment Match Challenge, a one-off payment of £100,000 was made from GMDRF to Forever Manchester's endowment fund and matched pound for pound by the Government's Grassroots Grants Endowment Challenge. The return on this investment of £200,000 is transferred into the fund each year to create a sustainable funding stream.

The remaining £375,646 was kept for grant-making, with the aim of keeping £200,000 in flow-through funds for emergency grant-making. Investment income from the endowed sum is added to the flow-through account on a quarterly basis.

As with all disaster funds, the facility for the public to donate to the fund either in general or in response to specific events was established, so that the potential for future growth of the fund is encouraged.

Since its inception as the GMDRF in 2009, Forever Manchester has distributed £511,426 from the Fund, £35,000 more than the value of the original transfer. The combined Fund value (endowment investment and current flow-through bank account balance) currently stands at £272,891, evidencing the value of this model of investment and delivery.

Financial Review of Investment

Forever Manchester's investment managers are appointed for periods of three years, although any appointment can be reviewed sooner – and the appointment terminated - if the Board endorses any such recommendation from the Investment Committee.

The Investment Committee, under delegation from the Board, is responsible for overseeing the performance of the investment(s), the investment managers and all other aspects of investment policy. Our current investment managers are Barclays Wealth.

In the last year the value of the endowment has fluctuated slightly but the broad base of stock investments has created stability despite variations in the performance of global markets and sectors. There is an expectation from our investment managers that there will be increased volatility in the coming year, but that the spread of investments should continue to provide resilience to endowment value, as much as this can be predicted.

Date	Endowment Market value
31.03.2025	£190,288
31.03.2024	£196,966

Fund Information

Balance of distribution funds in the bank account at 31st March 2025 was £82,603 (31st March 2024 - £185,596), following some significant awards made in the reporting period.

Awards Made 2024-25

The following awards were made through the GMDRF in the 2024-25 financial year.

Recipient	Purpose	Amount Awarded
Manchester City Council	Greater Manchester was impacted on New Years Eve through New Years Day 2025 by a weather front which resulted in widespread flooding, with Greater Manchester Resilience Forum declaring a Major Incident.	£7,800
Stockport MBC	Support was awarded to the 3 worst affected boroughs, equating to £200 per affected property.	£60,000
Wigan MBC		£42,600

Monitoring

Local Authorities who receive an award are sent an award agreement which includes monitoring requirements. Final monitoring for these awards is not due until October 2025 and will be summarised in next year's report.

Process Review

In late 2023 and early 2024, Forever Manchester worked with the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit (GMRU) to review the GMDRF criteria, process and panel membership. It was concluded that the criteria and process were still fit for purpose, with one update made to the personnel who could confirm that an incident had met the eligibility criteria.

Panel membership has been reviewed as several members of the panel had stepped down or no longer held relevant positions. Panel members with appropriate background and experience were identified and approached by the GMRU and an updated panel is now in place.

Appendix 1

Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund Guidelines

Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund

Forever Manchester, The Community Foundation for Greater Manchester, (charity registration number 1017504) manages the Greater Manchester Disaster Relief Fund, which was previously administrated by the Association for Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA).

The Fund was established as the Greater Manchester County Disaster Relief Trust in 1979 in response to the Manchester Woolworth's fire tragedy. Its aim was to provide financial support to victims of this fire and other large-scale disasters who were experiencing distress, sickness or other disability as a result of a tragedy. Since then, the Fund has provided financial support to those affected by a number of major incidents across Greater Manchester.

Purpose of the Fund

To give monetary support for the relief of **immediate financial need**, as a result of a **disaster/emergency** involving loss of life or injury to multiple people or property within Greater Manchester.

To be eligible, an incident must be confirmed as meeting the eligibility criteria below by the Chief Resilience Officer or a strategic commander within the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit, Resilience Directorate, GMCA.

Indicators of Eligibility

To be recommended as eligible to apply to the Fund, it is expected that an incident would have triggered one of the following:

- A Civil Contingencies Act declared emergency:
 - (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom,
 - (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, or
 - (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.
- A multi-agency emergency declared by Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, North West Ambulance Service or one of the Greater Manchester local authorities. A multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group or a multi-agency Tactical Coordinating Group formed with a Gold Strategy agreed.

What CANNOT be supported?

- An incident which does not trigger any of the above, and/or which is not recommended as appropriate by one or more of the recognised individuals.
- An incident where the majority of those affected reside outside of the ten boroughs comprising Greater Manchester.

Who can Apply

Once an incident has been recognised as eligible, Forever Manchester would invite applications to be submitted by the Local Authority where the incident occurred. If an incident affects multiple Local Authorities, all affected Local Authorities can apply but they must liaise with other applicant Authorities to ensure there is no duplication. The Fund can only support applications for incidents which occur within, or have significant impact upon, one of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.

The use of the Fund is for cases where there is no possibility of gaining financial assistance from elsewhere. The application needs to demonstrate that this is the case.

How much can you apply for?

There is no upper limit on amounts that can be applied for, however the Fund will only support costs relating to **immediate and/or short-term needs** caused by the disaster, which cannot be funded through any other source. The applicant authority will need to clearly outline how they meet these criteria within their application.

Appendix 2

GMDRF Process

- When an incident occurs which has the potential to need support from the fund, the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit will contact us, or if Forever Manchester becomes aware of an incident which we believe may trigger a need for the Fund, we contact the GMRU directly.
- Dependent upon the obvious scale of the incident, Forever Manchester may wish to open an appeal.
- As per the guidelines one of the agreed posts (see fund guidelines) must confirm in writing that the incident is suitable to be considered for support from the fund before any application can be assessed and submitted to panel.
- An application is submitted by an affected local authority to Forever Manchester via the GMRU, assessed, processed and emailed out to panel members as soon as possible. This includes official confirmation of the eligibility of the relevant incident, as per the GMDRF guidelines.
- Any panel member who may have a conflict of interest regarding an application should advise Forever Manchester accordingly.
- Panel members will be advised of available funds and asked to consider the request in light of the outlined impact and need, as well as financial resources available.
- Panel members read the information provided and make a recommendation to Forever Manchester by email. A recommendation should be made to either support or not support the application and to advise of any amendments to the amount requested, if it is felt that the request is too much/too little or would use up too much of the available funding in the context of other need. An email discussion may occur between the panel members. Panel members may also advise Forever Manchester if they feel any conditions should be attached to awards made. We ask for a response from panel members as soon as possible or within 48 hours.
- Once a majority decision is reached (or 4 responses with a majority decision), a ratification recommendation is prepared and sent to the Forever Manchester Board of Trustees for ratification.
- As soon as a recommendation has been ratified Forever Manchester will inform the applicant and arrange payment.
- Applicants are required to report back to Forever Manchester regarding spend and impact relating to the award made.



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